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Charlie Javice, 27

Founder and CEO, Frank

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When the time came for Charlie Javice to make a decision about college, she considered attending school in Canada in order to cut costs. Thanks to family help, scholarships and student loans, she ended up attending the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, from which she would

graduate in three years. There she noticed with dismay that "a lot of people took jobs to pay back their student loans" instead of pursuing their interests or goals.

Her experience inspired her to create Frank, which she likens to preventive medicine for student loan debt. Frank aims to help students avoid financial disaster.

The software guides students through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, enabling them to complete the form within minutes, usually. Javice says the program breaks down the tough form into easy steps, like TurboTax does for the Form 1040. Students can see which scholarships and loans they're eligible for and understand what it will mean to take on the debt load they're considering. So far the platform has helped 300,000 students unlock around \$7 billion in financial aid.

Record-high outstanding student loan debt in the United States affects more than just terribly burdened students, said Michael Eisenberg, a partner at venture capital fund Aleph, an early investor in Frank. "Mature adults with children and grandchildren are still paying off their student loans," he said. "It's not OK as a society."

Javice has done her homework. Frank doesn't focus on the Ivy League borrower, as many loan-refinance startups do. Indeed, many users are lower income, and some have spent time in prison. Javice supports online education, which is largely used by minority and lower-income students and, she says, unfairly demonized.

And because women hold a disproportionate amount of student loan debt in this country, Frank is "not as masculine around money," Javice said.

"I've never seen anyone more dogged about how to tackle this seemingly intractable problem" said Fisenberg, who has known the founder since she was

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